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THE FAIRY GREEN

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

FAIRIES AND CHIMNEYS

THE FAIRY FLUTE

FAIRIES AND FRIENDS

A SMALL CRUSE

A GARLAND OF ROSE'S : COLLECTED
POEMS

FORTY GOOD-NIGHT TALES

FORTY GOOD-MORNING TALES

TWENTY TEA-TIME TALES

THE STRANGE ADVENTURES OF CAPTAIN
MARWHOPPLE

EIGHT LITTLE PLAYS FOR CHILDREN

SEVEN LITTLE PLAYS FOR CHILDREN

AFTER ALL

THE SPANISH CLOAK

RHYME BOOK FOR ADAM

THE FAIRY GREEN

BY

ROSE FYLEMAN

AUTHOR OF "FAIRIES AND CHIMNEYS"



METHUEN & CO. LTD. LONDON

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TO
ALL TEACHERS
OF LITTLE CHILDREN
IN GENERAL
AND ONE IN PARTICULAR

165673

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THE FAIRY GREEN

FAIRIES

VISION

I've seen her, I've seen her
 Beneath an apple-tree ;
The minute that I saw her there
With stars and dewdrops in her hair
 I knew it must be she.
She's sitting on a dragon-fly
 All shining green and gold ;
The dragon-fly goes circling round
A little way above the ground—
 She isn't taking hold.

I've seen her, I've seen her,
 I never, never knew
That anything could be so sweet ;
She has the tiniest hands and feet,
 Her wings are very blue.

She holds her little head like *this*
Because she is a queen ;
(I can't describe it all in words)
She's throwing kisses to the birds
And laughing in between.

I've seen her, I've seen her—
I simply ran and ran ;
Put down your sewing quickly, please,
Let's hurry to the orchard trees
As softly as we can.
I had to go and leave her there,
I felt I couldn't stay,
I wanted you to see her too—
But oh, whatever shall we do
If she has flown away ?

PLEASE

Please be careful where you tread,
The fairies are about ;
Last night, when I had gone to bed,
I heard them creeping out.
And wouldn't it be a dreadful thing
To do a fairy harm ?
To crush a little delicate wing
Or bruise a tiny arm ?
They're all about the place, I know,
So do be careful where you go.

Please be careful what you say,
They're often very near,
And though they turn their heads away
They cannot help but hear.
And think how terribly you would mind
If, even for a joke,
You said a thing that seemed unkind
To the dear little fairy folk.
I'm sure they're simply everywhere,
So *promise* me that you'll take care.

THE DAPHNE BUSH

All about the daphne bush the happy fairies
went,
And spread abroad their silken hair to
catch its magic scent ;
They chanted little silver tunes, they
danced the whole day long ;
The rosy bush was ringed around with
chains of coloured song.

They danced, they sang, they flung about
their tiny fairy names,
Till swiftly over all the sky there ran
the sunset flames ;
Then high into the glowing air they
leapt with joyful shout,
And with the ruddy shreds of mist they
wrapped themselves about.

Into my quiet garden close they swiftly
dropped again

(The music of their merriment tinkled
like falling rain) ;

Laughing they swayed, while from their
hair they shook the warm perfume,

Till all the place seemed filled with clouds
of drifting daphne bloom.

ALMS IN AUTUMN

Spindle-wood, spindle-wood, will you lend
me, pray,

A little flaming lantern to guide me on
my way?

The fairies all have vanished from the
meadow and the glen

And I would fain go seeking till I find
them once again.

Lend me now a lantern that I may bear
a light

To find the hidden pathway in the dark-
ness of the night.

Ash-tree, ash-tree, throw me, if you please,
Throw me down a slender bunch of russet-
gold keys.

I fear the gates of Fairyland may all be
shut so fast

That nothing but your magic keys will
ever take me past.

I'll tie them to my girdle, and as I go along
My heart will find a comfort in the
tinkle of their song.

Holly-bush, holly-bush, help me in my
task,

A pocketful of berries is all the alms I
ask :

A pocketful of berries to thread in glow-
ing strands

(I would not go a-visiting with nothing
in my hands)

So fine will be the rosy chains, so gay,
so glossy bright

They'll set the realms of Fairyland all
dancing with delight.

FAIRY MUSIC

When the fiddlers play their tunes you
 may sometimes hear,
Very softly chiming in, magically clear,
Magically high and sweet, the tiny crystal
 notes
Of fairy voices bubbling free from tiny
 fairy throats.

When the birds at break of day chant
 their morning prayers,
Or on sunny afternoons pipe ecstatic airs,
Comes an added rush of sound to the
 silver din—
Songs of fairy troubadours gaily joining
 in.

When athwart the drowsy fields summer
 twilight falls,
Through the tranquil air there float elfin
 madrigals

And in wild November nights, on the
winds astride,
Fairy hosts go rushing by, singing as
they ride.

Every dream that mortals dream, sleep-
ing or awake,
Every lovely fragile hope—these the
fairies take,
Delicately fashion them and give them
back again
In tender, limpid melodies that charm
the hearts of men.

THE HAYFIELD

Over the field the fairies went
Singing and dancing and well content ;
Over the field of sweet warm grass
I saw their shimmering cohorts pass.

The clover flamed to a ruddier glow,
The slender buttercups curtseyed low.
The wondering daisies, innocent-eyed
Bowed their heads to the radiant tide.

And flirting butterflies, pearly white,
Left the flowers for a new delight,
Left their loves for the fairies' sake,
And fluttered dizzily in their wake.

Over the swaying grass they swept,
Over the hedgerow soared and leapt,
Broke and scattered in golden spray,
Gleamed and glittered—and melted away.

THE ISLAND

I know an island in a lake,
Green upon waters grey ;
It has a strange enchanted air ;
I hear the fairies singing there
When I go by that way.

They guard their hidden dwelling-place
With bands of stalwart reeds,
But sometimes, by a happy chance,
I see them all come out and dance
Upon the water-weeds.

One night, one summer night, I know
Suddenly I shall wake,
And very softly hasten down
And out beyond the sleeping town
To find my fairy lake

I shall not need to seek a boat,
It will be moored, I think,
Within a tiny pebbled bay
Where meadow-sweet and mallow sway
Close to the water's brink.

The moon from shore to shadowy shore
Will make a shining trail,
And I shall sing their fairy song
As joyfully I float along—
I shall not need a sail.

And peering through a starlit haze
I presently shall see,
Where swift the waiting reeds unclose,
The fairies all in rows and rows
Waiting to welcome me.

SMITH SQUARE, WESTMINSTER

In Smith Square, Westminster, the houses
stand so prim,
With slender railings at their feet and
windows straight and slim ;
And all day long they staidly stare with
gentle placid gaze,
And dream of joyous happenings in
splendid bygone days.

In Smith Square, Westminster, you must
not make a noise,
No shrill-voiced vendors harbour there,
no shouting errand-boys ;
But very busy gentlemen step swiftly out
and in
With little leather cases and umbrellas
neatly thin.

Yet sometimes when the summer night
her starry curtain spreads,
And all the busy gentlemen are sleeping
in their beds,
You hear a gentle humming like the
humming of a hive,
And Smith Square, Westminster, begins
to come alive.

For all the houses start to sing, honey-
sweet and low,
The tender little lovely songs of long and
long ago,
And all the fairies round about come
hastening up in crowds,
Until the quiet air is filled with rainbow-
coloured clouds.

On roof and rail and chimney-pot they
delicately perch,
They hang like jewelled fringes on the
ledges of the church ;

SMITH SQUARE, WESTMINSTER 23

They dance about the roadway upon
nimble, noiseless feet,
While the houses keep on chanting with
a soft enticing beat.

And still they weave their sparkling webs
and still they leap and whirl
Until the far horizon's edge is faintly
rimmed with pearl
And the morning breeze blows out the
stars discreetly, one by one
And the sentries on the Abbey signal
down—"The Sun—the Sun!"

And long before the butlers stumble
drowsily downstairs,
And long before their masters have begun
to say their prayers,
The fairies all have pranced away upon
the morning beams,
And Smith Square, Westminster, is wrapped
once more in dreams.

THE ENCHANTED PRINCESS

She wanders in the forest with wide and
solemn eyes ;
A little shade of wilderment across her
forehead lies.

No timid woodland creature her footfall
need affright,
The shadow of her floating hair is not
more soft and light.

She hears the gentle cadence of bird and
wind and stream,
They make a little song for her, like
singing in a dream.

Across the distant valley the pleasant
sunbeams fall ;
The children in the cowslip field merrily
laugh and call.

She does not hear their laughter, she
does not feel the sun

She cannot leave the shadowed wood
until the spell is done.

THE GOBLIN TO THE FAIRY QUEEN

What do you lack, queen, queen,
That is precious and fine and rare?
A jewelled snood that shall lie between
The delicate waves of your hair?
I will ride through the sky on the
evening wind
With a golden needle and thread,
And string up the tiniest stars I can find,
To glitter about your head.

What can I do, queen, queen,
To hasten the hours along
When you grow weary of woodland
green,
Weary of woodland song?
A cage of gossamer gold I will tie
On to a skylark's wing,
And there you shall hang in the midst of
the sky
And tremble to hear him sing.

Grant me a boon, queen, queen ;

 This is the boon that I ask—

Let me do service, mighty or mean,

 Give me a task, a task.

Are there no jackanapes giants to slay ?

 Are there no dragons to fight ?

Nothing shall daunt me by dark or by
 day ;

 Make me your goblin knight !

THE FAIRY QUEEN TO THE GOBLIN

Last night I heard a singing—a singing
in my dreams,
It wandered through my land of sleep
like little silver streams ;
Like little purling silver streams that
gently laugh and coo—
Goblin with the shining eyes, goblin was
it you ?

Softer than the tender croon of my
happy doves,
Sweeter than my nightingales pouring
forth their loves,
Clearer than my valiant lark triumphant
in the blue ;
Goblin with the whimsic smile, goblin,
was it you ?

All night long the singer stayed close
beside my bower,
Weaving his enchanted songs, till that
magic hour
When the early morning light creeps
across the dew ;
Goblin with the steadfast heart, goblin,
was it you ?

FAIRIES IN AUTUMN

You perch upon the leaves where the
trees are very high,
And you all shout together as the wind
goes by ;
The merry mad wind sets the leaves all
afloat,
And off you go a-sailing in an airy wee
boat.

You fly to the edges of a grim grey
cloud,
And you all start a-dancing and a-singing
very loud ;
The cloud melts away in a shower of
peevish rain
And you slide down from heaven on a
slim silver chain.

TREES AND FAIRIES

The larch-tree gives them needles
To stitch their gossamer things ;
Carefully, cunningly toils the oak
To shape the cups of the fairy folk ;
The sycamore gives them wings.

The lordly fir-tree rocks them
High on his swinging sails ;
The hawthorn fashions their tiny spears ;
The whispering alder charms their ears
With soft, mysterious tales.

The chestnut gives them candles
To make their ballroom fine ;
And the elder-bush and the hazel tree
Assist their delicate revelry
With nuts and fragrant wine.

FAIRIES IN THE MALVERNS

As I walked over Hollybush Hill
The sun was low and the winds were
still,
And never a whispering branch I heard
Nor ever the tiniest call of a bird.

And when I came to the topmost height
Oh, but I saw such a wonderful sight ;
All about on the hill-crest there
The fairies danced in the golden air.

Danced and frolicked with never a sound
In and out in a magical round ;
Wide and wider the circle grew
Then suddenly melted into the blue.

.
As I walked down into Eastnor Vale
The stars already were twinkling pale,
And over the spaces of dew-white grass
I saw a marvellous pageant pass.

Tiny riders on tiny steeds,
 Decked with blossoms and armed with
 reeds,
 With gossamer banners floating far
 And a radiant queen in an ivory car.

The beeches spread their petticoats wide
 And curtsyed low upon either side ;
 The rabbits scurried across the glade
 To peep at the glittering cavalcade.

Far and farther I saw them go
 And vanish into the woods below ;
 Then over the shadowy woodland ways
 I wandered home in a sweet amaze.

.
 But Malvern people need fear no ill
 Since fairies bide in their country still.

THE FAIRIES SEND MESSENGERS

They sent a stout little red-breast bird ;
He sang from the garden wall ;
Surely, oh, surely the children heard,
But never they came to his call.

They sent a capering, glad young breeze ;
He shouted, he rattled about ;
But the children sat with their books on
 their knees
And gave no heed to his shout.

They sent a bee in a velvet coat,
Busily, busily gay ;
He hummed his tale on a spirited note
But the children chased him away.

They sent a brave little fairy sprite ;
She peeped round the window frame ;
The children looked, and their eyes grew
 bright,
And they came !

DUNSLEY GLEN

There is no road to Dunsley Glen,
I should not know the way again
Because the fairies took me there,
Down by a little rocky stair—
A little stair all twists and turns,
Half hidden by the spreading ferns.

High overhead the trees were green,
With little bits of blue between,
So high that they could see, I'm sure,
Beyond the wood, beyond the moor,
The water many miles away
Mistily shining in the bay.

Deep in the glen a streamlet cool
Ran down into a magic pool,
With mossy caverns all about
Where fairies fluttered in and out ;
Their sparkling wings and golden hair
Made dancing twinkles here and there.

I stood and watched them at their play
Until I dared no longer stay?
I knew that I might seek and seek
On every day of every week
Ere I should find the place again—
There is no road to Dunsley Glen.

BIRD-LORE

PEACOCKS

Peacocks sweep the fairies' rooms ;
They use their folded tails for brooms ;
But fairy dust is brighter far
Then any mortal colours are,
And all about their tails it clings
In strange designs of rounds and rings ;
And that is why they strut about
And proudly spread their feathers out.

Peacocks

Peacocks

THE CUCKOO

The Cuckoo is a tell-tale,
A mischief-making bird ;
He flies to East, he flies to West
And whispers into every nest
The wicked things he's heard ;
He loves to spread his naughty lies,
He laughs about it as he flies :
“ Cuckoo,” he cries, “ cuckoo, cuckoo,
It's true, it's true.”

And when the fairies catch him
His busy wings they dock,
They shut him up for evermore
(He may not go beyond the door)
Inside a wooden clock ;
Inside a wooden clock he cowers
And has to tell the proper hours—
“ Cuckoo,” he cries, “ cuckoo, cuckoo,
It's true, it's true.”

THE ROOKS

High in the elm-trees sit the rooks
Or flit about with busy looks

And solemn, ceaseless caws.

Small wonder they are so intent,
They are the fairies' Parliament—

They make the fairy laws.

They never seem to stop all day,
And you can hear from far away

Their busy chatter-chat.

They work so very hard indeed
You'd wonder that the fairies need

So many laws as that.

THE ROBIN

The robin is the fairies' page ;
They keep him neatly dressed
For country service or for town
In dapper livery of brown
And little scarlet vest.

On busy errands all day long
He hurries to and fro
With watchful eyes and nimble wings—
There are not very many things
The robin doesn't know.

And he can tell you, if he will,
The latest fairy news :
The quaint adventures of the King,
And whom the Queen is visiting,
And where she gets her shoes.

And lately, when the fairy Court
Invited me to tea,
He stood behind the Royal Chair ;
And here I solemnly declare,
When he discovered I was there.
That robin *winked* at me.

THE COCK

The kindly cock is the fairies' friend,
He warns them when their revels must
end ;

He never forgets to give the word,
For the cock is a thoroughly punctual
bird.

And since he grieves that he never can fly
Like all the other birds, up in the sky,
The fairies put him now and again
High on a church for a weather-vane.

Little for sun or for rain he cares ;
He turns about with the proudest airs
And chuckles with joy as the clouds go
past
To think he is up in the sky at last.

THE GROUSE

The Grouse that lives on the moorland
wide

Is filled with a most ridiculous pride ;
He thinks that it all belongs to him,
And every one else must obey his whim.
When the queer wee folk who live on the
moors

Come joyfully leaping out of their doors
To frisk about on the warm sweet heather
Laughing and chattering all together,
He looks askance at their rollicking play
And calls to them in the angriest way :
“ You’re a feather-brained, foolish, frivolous
pack,
Go back, you rascally imps, go back ! ”

But little enough they heed his shout,
Over the rocks they tumble about ;
They chase each other over the ling ;
They kick their heels in the heather and
sing :

“ Oho, Mr. Grouse, you’d best beware
Or some fine day, if you don’t take care,
The witch who lives in the big brown bog
With a wise old weasel, a rat and a frog,
Will come a-capering over the fell
And put you under a horrible spell ;
Your feathers will moult and your voice
 will crack—
Go back, you silly old bird, go back ! ”

A LITTLE GIRL

BEFORE

Before I was a little girl I was a little
bird,
I could not laugh, I could not dance, I
could not speak a word ;
But all about the woods I went and up
into the sky—
And isn't it a pity I've forgotten how to
fly ;

I often came to visit you. I used to sit
and sing
Upon our purple lilac-bush that smells so
sweet in Spring ;
But when you thanked me for my song
of course you never knew
I soon should be a little girl and come
to live with you.

SINGING-TIME

I wake in the morning early
And always the very first thing,
I poke out my head and I sit up in bed
And I sing and I sing and I sing.

THERE ARE NO WOLVES IN ENGLAND NOW

There are no wolves in England now,
nor any grizzly bears ;
You could not meet them after dark
upon the attic stairs.

When Nanna goes to fetch the tea there
is no need at all
To leave the nursery door ajar in case
you want to call.

And mother says, in fairy tales, those
bits are never true
That tell you all the dreadful deeds that
wicked fairies do.

And wouldn't it be silly for a great big girl
like me
To be the leastest bit afraid of things that
couldn't be ?

MRS. BROWN

As soon as I'm in bed at night
And snugly settled down,
The little girl I am by day
Goes very suddenly away,
And then I'm Mrs. Brown.

I have a family of six,
And all of them have names,
The girls are Joyce and Nancy Maud,
The boys are Marmaduke and Claude!
And Percival and James.

We have a house with twenty rooms
A mile away from town ;
I think it's good for girls and boys
To be allowed to make a noise—
And so does Mr. Brown.

We do the most exciting things,
Enough to make you creep ;
And on and on and on we go—
I sometimes wonder if I know
When I have gone to sleep.

THE SPRING

A little mountain spring I found
That fell into a pool ;
I made my hands into a cup
And caught the sparkling water up—
It tasted fresh and cool.

A solemn little frog I spied
Upon the rocky brim ;
He looked so boldly in my face,
I'm certain that he thought the place
Belonged by rights to him.

COUSIN GWEN

I like my cousin very much
Because of course one should ;
She comes to spend the day with me
And stays to dinner and to tea,
And she is very good.

Her shining hair is smooth and neat,
She always wears a plait,
And French Translation she can do
And Algebra and Science too,
And clever things like that.

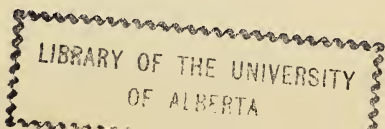
My Nanna thinks I ought to try
And copy Cousin Gwen ;
But I could never be like her,
Indeed, indeed, I wish I were—
Excepting now and then.

THE BUTCHER

The butcher's shop is open wide
And everyone can see inside ;
He stands behind the rows of meat
And gazes out into the street.

He always wears a coat of blue,
He has a linen apron too,
And with his knife he rather looks
Like ogres in the story-books.

He smiles and nods and says " Good-day "
If nurse and I go by that way
When we are shopping in the town—
I've never seen him sitting down.



THE PILLAR-BOX

The pillar-box is fat and red,
It's mouth is very wide,
It wears a Tammy on its head—
It must be dark inside.

And really it's the greatest fun
When mother lets me stop
And post the letters one by one—
I like to hear them drop.

THE DENTIST

I'd like to be a dentist with a plate upon
the door
And a little bubbling fountain in the middle
of the floor ;
With lots of tiny bottles all arranged in
coloured rows
And a page-boy with a line of silver buttons
down his clothes.

I'd love to polish up the things and put
them every day
Inside the darling chests of drawers all
tidily away ;
And every Sunday afternoon when nobody
was there
I should go riding up and down upon
the velvet chair.

JOYS

I'm rather fond of medicine, especially if
it's pink,
Or else the fizzy-wizzy kind that makes
you want to blink ;
And eucalyptus lozenges are very nice I
think.

I like it when I'm really ill and have to
stay in bed
With mother's grown-up pillows all frilly
round my head ;
But measles is the funniest, because you get
so red.

MY POLICEMAN

He is always standing there
At the corner of the Square ;
He is very big and fine
And his silver buttons shine.

All the carts and taxis do
Everything he tells them to,
And the little errand-boys
When they pass him make no noise.

Though I seem so very small
I am not afraid at all ;
He and I are friends, you see,
And he always smiles at me.

Once I wasn't very good
Rather near to where he stood,
But he never said a word
Though I'm sure he must have heard.

Nurse has a policeman too
(Hers has brown eyes, mine has blue),
Hers is sometimes on a horse,
But I like mine best of course.

THE PORRIDGE PLATE

My porridge plate at Grannie's house is
white and misty blue,
And as I eat the porridge up the picture all
comes through ;
There is a castle on a lake, a tall tall lady
too.

The castle has a flight of steps and lots of
pointed towers,
A garden and a summer-house a little bit
like ours,
And trees with leaves like feathers and the
most enormous flowers.

I don't care much for porridge in an
ordinary way
(Though it's jolly when there's treacle and
your Nanna lets you play),
But when I stop at Grannie's house I like
it every day.

THE FAIRY GREEN

Upon the magic green I stood
 Within the fairy ring,
Close to the little rustling wood
 Where fairies always sing.

I was a little bit afraid,
 I kept my eyes shut tight,
While all around they danced and played—
 I felt the shining light.

Nearer and nearer still they came,
 They touched my dress, my hair ;
They called me softly by my name ;
 I heard them everywhere.

I never moved, I never spoke
 (Oh, but my heart beat fast),
And so the little fairy folk
 All went away at last.

To-morrow I shall go again
And seek the magic place,
I shall not be so foolish then,
I shall not hide my face.

But I shall stay for hours and hours
Until the daylight ends,
And we shall dance among the flowers
And be the greatest friends.

And I shall learn their fairy song ;
And when I come away
Shall dream of it the whole night long
And sing it every day.

THE VISIT

When I went to Fairyland, visiting the
Queen
I rode upon a peacock, blue and gold and
green ;
Silver was the harness, crimson were the
reins,
All hung about with little bells that swung
on silken chains.

When I went to Fairyland, indeed you
cannot think
What pretty things I had to eat, what
pretty things to drink.
And did you know that butterflies could
sing like little birds ?
And did you guess that fairy-talk is not a
bit like words ?

When I went to Fairyland—of all the
lovely things!—

They really taught me how to fly, they gave
me fairy wings ;

And every night I listen for a tapping on
the pane—

I want so very much to go to Fairyland
again.

ENVOI
TO THE FAIRIES

Kindly little fairy friends,
Here I fain would make amends ;
For I seek my verses through,
Find no word of thanks to you.

Many, oh, so many times
You have helped me with my rhymes ;
When my tiny songs were dumb
Oft and often have you come ;
Oft and often have I heard,
Sweeter than the song of bird,
Fairy voices, crystal-clear,
Very softly at my ear
(While you poised on fluttering wings)
Telling me enchanting things.
Often at the fall of night,
In the gentle, dusky light.

Through my garden as I went,
To my joy and wonderment
Suddenly the air around
Blossomed into lovely sound,
And I knew that you were there
All about me everywhere.

Could I tell what I have heard,
Magic sound and magic word.
There would be a book indeed
Fit for all the world to read.
But alas!—For all my pains,
Of those sweet mysterious strains
I can only hope to catch
Here an echo, there a snatch.
Yours is any happy line,
All that's done amiss is mine.

The author's best thanks are due to the Editor and Proprietors of *Punch*, through whose courtesy she is able to include in this collection a number of verses which have already appeared in that paper.

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